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UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000159

SIPDIS

CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE SECRETARY FROM FOREIGN MINISTER
GUTIERREZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM FOREIGN MINISTER GUTIERREZ TO
SECRETARY POWELL

SIPDIS

REF: STATE 3578

1. Foreign Minister Edgar Gutierrez gave us on January 21 a letter to Secretary Powell (dated January 17) in which he thanks the Secretary for his letter (reftel) congratulating Gutierrez on his nomination as Foreign Minister. In his letter, Gutierrez expresses his desire to work together with the USG to address shared concerns, and restates the Guatemalan Government's interest in resolving its border differences with Belize. An Embassy translation of the text follows in paragraph two; the original is being sent by pouch to WHA/CEN.

2. Begin text:
Guatemala, January 17, 2003

Most Excellent Mr. Secretary:

It is an honor for me to thank you for your letter of congratulation and the remarks you made in it about my experience. I am committed to my country by the confidence given me by President Alfonso Portillo in naming me Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala.

I fully agree with your comment that our countries share common goals like those listed by you in your letter. In that regard, I want to express to you my determination to address these issues, which, in some cases, I believe are goals where we have shared responsibility.

I view my responsibility at the head of this Ministry as a challenge to find means to confront these shared concerns that you mention. The goals we share in the furtherance of our bilateral relations will constitute an important priority for me.

In regard to the territorial differences between Guatemala and Belize, I want to reiterate to you emphatically that, as is outlined in the Third Report of the President to the Congress of the Republic, this issue represents "a fundamental theme that the Government has sought to resolve through peaceful means, through legal action and in accord with the stipulations of international law. The policy of the Government has been to actively seek a resolution to the border differences that is peaceful, honorable, equitable and permanent."

In the same manner, I would like to express my desire that the cooperation between our nations be strengthened and continue in every field, for the purpose of building a more worthy, secure and just world, which is the legitimate aspiration of our citizens and all humanity.

Thank you again, and I hope in the near future to be able to speak personally with you. I take advantage of this opportunity to express to you my highest esteem and most distinguished consideration.

Edgar Gutierrez
Minister of Foreign Affairs
(end text)

Hamilton